the growth of labour intensive sectors such as Agriculture and Allied Activities, Food Processing, Rural Non-farm Sector, Small and Medium Enterprises and Services Sector including Health, Education, Information Technology & Communication. National Food for Work Programme, and the proposed Act on National Rural Employment Guarantee will generate additional demand for labour in the rural areas. These are applicable to all States including the State of Maharashtra.

Opening of still well road

*278. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that China and India have lately been actively working on plans to reopen the still well road between the two countries through Myanmar, which would reduce the distance between the two nations from over 6,000 kms to just 1,300 kms;

(b) if so, the decision taken in the matter and the respective stand of India, Myanmar and China in regard thereto and how the benefits of increase in trade and facilities would be stored; and

(c) the steps taken and are being taken in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Government of India has discussed the possibility of improving road connectivity with Myanmar and China. However, the question of reopening of Still well road has not been discussed.

Boats seized by Pakistani Security Agency

*279. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the continuous problem of Indian fishermen and boats being taken into custody by the Pakistani Security

Agency;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to resolve this matter; and

(c) whether Government propose to sign an agreement with the Pakistani Authorities on the lines of the agreement between India and Sri Lankha?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matters regarding release of Indian fishermen in Pakistan and their boats are consistently taken up with Pakistan Government through diplomatic channels, both in Islamabad and New Delhi, and during high level contacts from time to time.

During the Foreign Secretary level talks held on December 27-28, 2004 at Islamabad it was agreed that immediate notification would be provided to the respective High Commissions through the Foreign Ministries of the arrested Indian/Pakistani nationals, consular access would be given to all the civilian prisioners (including fishermen) held in each other's country within three months from the date of their arrest and repatriation would be done immediately after completion of sentence and nationality verification.

During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan from February 15-17, 2005 and during the visit of President of Pakistan to India from April 16-18, 2005, the issue of early release and repatriation of all the Indian fishermen along with their boats was taken up.

(c) Government has not signed any formal agreement with Sri Lanka in this regard but has proposed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in fisheries which *inter alia* includes the issue of straying fishermen.

During the recently held technical level talks on May 10-11, 2005 in Islamabad, India and Pakistan have agreed on a consensus document of Memorandum of Understanding establishing a communication link between Indian Coast Guards (ICG) and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PSMA) which *inter alia* provides for a formal mechanism for exchange of information

regarding EEZ violations, search and rescue operations etc. The MoU will be signed formally after approval by the respective Governments.

Sports facilities in Lucknow

†*280. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Uttar Pradesh had sent projects for the construction of judo hall, volleyball indoor hall and shooting range in Guru Gobind Singh Sports College, Lucknow, for the approval of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have given approval to the aforesaid projects, if not, by when these are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government had received the following proposal from the Government of Uttar Pradesh for central assistance under the Scheme of 'Grants for Creation of Sports Infrastructure' in Guru Govind Singh Sports College, Lucknow.

(i) Indoor Stadium (Cat. I) for Volleyball.

(ii) Indoor Stadium (Cat. III) for Judo.

(iii) Shooting range.

(c) No, Sir. The Government had decided to transfer the sports infrastructure schemes to the State sector *w.e.f.* 1.4.2005 and accordingly no funds have been allocated in the budget for 2005-06 for sports infrastructure. As such, new proposal of sports infrastructure projects have to be funded by the State Government out of their own resources. All State Governments have accordingly been informed on 28.2.2005.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.